Steps to boost morale of Middle Level Officers in the Army

†3428. SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the arrangements made to encourage officers, specially middle level officers (Captain and Major) in the army;

(b) the number of officers who played their role successfully during Kargil war and what incentives were given to them; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in order to boost the morale of officers and to promote them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMANLAL GUPTA) : (a) The army has various avenues for career enhancement in the form of professional and competitive courses to encourage middle level officers to progress inservice. In addition upto the rank of Majors, officers get acting and substantive time-based promotions.

(b) 'OP Vijay' (Kargil) was a war like engagement where a large part of the Indian Army including Officers were mobilised. The role played by the officers so deployed has been widely feted and acclaimed by all quarters. The families of the Martyrs have been provided with sizable compensations in keeping with the national sentiments.

(c) A report focused on the Restructuring of the Officers' Cadre of the Army is currently under consideration in this connection.

Facilities for parents of Soldiers and Officers

†3429. SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR : Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the facilities to be provided to the parents of soldiers and officers by issuing them identity cards;

(b) whether it is a fact that certain Canteens do not provide proper facilities on the basis of these identity cards, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what arrangements would be made for providing more facilities to their parents in order to boost the morale of soldiers ?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA) : (a) to (c) The parents of soldiers and officers are entitled to Medical/Dental treatment from Service Institutions on the basis of entitlement certificates. Besides they are also entitled for all Canteen facilities except liquor on production of dependent identity card issued by the competent authority. Provision of more facilities to the parents of service personnel is an on-going exercise and reviewed from time to time based on need.

Laying of mines in Indian territory by Pak Troops

3430. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that recently Pakistani troops have been sneaking into Indian space and laying mines in the Indian territory particularly along Punjab border;

(b) if so, how many casualties occurred due to such mining; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to intensify patrolling ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA) : (a) No, Sir. However a total of sixteen anti-personnel and one anti-tank mine with Pak markings were recovered in the Khemkaran Sector of Punjab on four occasions between 16th December, 2002 and 29th January, 2003. Since these mines were about 10 to 20 metres inside our territory, they could have possible been thrown by Pak troops from their side of the International Border (IB).

(b) One BSF Constable was injured when he stepped on an anti-personnel mine in the same sector.

(c) Patrolling and surveillance have been stepped up all along the IB to prevent recurrence of such an incident.

laying of mines during military mobilizations

3431. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that one million mines were laid during military mobilisation after the December, 2001 Parliament attack;

(b) whether Government have since started demining operations and the areas are being handed over back to the farmers;